

Falls Church Senior Citizens Commission
Minutes of Meeting
January 25, 2006

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Bea Brady called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Bea Brady, Jan Greenberg, Kate Ripley, Susan Pollack, and Ann O'Neill

Staff: Letha Flippin

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes for the November 16, 2005 meeting were approved unanimously.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Fitness Support Group - Letha Flippin shared information with the Commission on a Fitness Support Group being cosponsored by the City and George Washington University's School of Physical Education. The six-week group meets each Friday to discuss health and fitness issues and the meetings are open to all. Several local health businesses, such as Curves and Olympus Gym, are offering discounts to participants in the group.

Older Americans Month Event - The Commission discussed ideas for this event. Letha Flippin announced that a Senior Health Fair is planned for May 23rd from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Senior Center. The Commission expressed interest in participating in this event as their activity for Older Americans Month. It was discussed that the event include demonstrations of classes or activities that are offered through the Recreation and Parks department that seniors might be interested in, such as line dancing or tai chi. It was also suggested that the Commission could cosponsor the event, and pass out small items and/or food at the event. Letha will invite Senior Center staff to the next meeting to discuss these possibilities further.

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5. CHAIRPERSONS REPORT - The Chairperson had no report.

6. STAFF REPORT - Letha Flippin reported that there will be recruitment fair for Boards and Commissions on Feb. 1 sponsored by the City Council. A representative is invited to attend to answer questions and talk about the Commission's work. It was noted that there is still a vacancy on the Senior Commission. Bea Brady volunteered to represent the Senior Commission at the fair.

Letha also reported that she has been contacted by the Falls Church City Public Schools' Communications Director to see if the Commission is interested in participating in a focus group. The School Board is reviewing its strategic plan and would like input from the community. The Commission felt that they did not have enough information about the schools to meet as a focus group; however Ann O'Neill did offer to speak to the schools' representative.

Letha also reported that the City is implementing changes to the congregate meal program at the senior center that will improve the overall quality of services provided to City seniors.

Lunches will be served three days a week instead of five beginning March 1, 2006. This is considered a pilot program and will be reviewed and evaluated in six months.

The decision to provide lunches three days a week instead of five was made after a careful review of the needs of City seniors based on lunch attendance, responses to the survey and program participation. The City is interested in providing enhanced services to City seniors and providing programs that reach beyond the current participants. These services include personal counseling, financial and insurance counseling, home visits, and new programs. The ability to provide these services requires a reallocation of the use of staff time, particularly for the Human Services Specialist serving the Senior Center. Omitting lunches two days a week allows the staff person greater scheduling flexibility.

There are a very small number of City residents that order lunch at the Senior Center. According to annual survey responses for the past several years the majority of participants do not eat lunch at the center but instead state that they attend the senior center for companionship. By reducing the food service to three days a week the City will be able to provide better services to a larger number of City seniors.

The decision was made with input and support from the majority of City residents that eat lunch at the center on a regular basis and the senior center advisory board. Information on the change has been posted and distributed to senior center participants.

Seniors affected by the change will have the option of bring lunch to the center or eating lunch at the near by James Lee Senior Center.

Following some discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Senior Citizens Commission supports the proposed change and believes it will better serve the needs of the City's senior population. The motion passed unanimously. Commission Hood voiced her opinion that the program be monitored and that consideration be given to eliminating the lunch program in the future.

7. Items Not On the Agenda – Commissioners noted that parking at the Community Center/City Hall continues to be an issue for seniors trying to attend events there.

ADJOURNMENT– the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

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